



02-06

STATEMENT OF POLICY

VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Policy

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) urges local health departments to address epidemics of violence in their communities and contributing factors such as alcohol and substance abuse and mental health issues, and to engage in doing so with community partners. NACCHO will work to increase awareness as well as change providers' attitudes and practices with regard to recognizing and reporting cases of intimate partner violence and referring survivors (e.g. women, children, elderly) to counseling and other support services. NACCHO supports:

- 1) Development and improvement of local, state, and national surveillance systems for both non-fatal and fatal violence and abuse events;
- 2) Development of programs, coalitions/partnerships, and other initiatives to prevent and reduce violence and abuse;
- 3) Increases in local, state, and national resources to support promising violence and abuse prevention and treatment programs; and
- 4) Increases in resources to address the underlying social determinants of violence and abuse, such as poverty, discrimination, lack of education, and lack of employment opportunities.³

Justification

Violence and abuse are public health problems that threaten the health and well-being of many persons of all ages in the United States. Intimate partner violence has generally not been treated as a public health issue, although women who have experienced intimate partner violence are more likely to be in poor health or develop a physical or mental illness than those who have not¹ and children who experience abuse are more likely to have low self esteem, unhealthy psycho-social development, and have difficulty forming healthy relationships with adults.² There are disparities in violence and abuse that contribute to the morbidity and mortality of specific population groups (e.g., people of color, elderly, women, children and youth).³

Local health departments have responsibilities for assessment, policy development and assurance and opportunities to work with their partners in schools and other educational systems, workplaces, health and human services (including agencies addressing mental health and substance abuse), faith-based communities, health-care systems, transportation, law enforcement and criminal justice, and other related private community-based organizations and facilities.

Record of Action

Proposed by Community Health and Prevention Advisory Committee

Adopted by NACCHO Board of Directors

July 10, 2002

Updated May 2007

¹ Shaw, Tina. (2001). National Conference of State Legislatures, Women's Health: An Emerging Definition.

² National Council on Child Abuse and Family Violence (2002). Child Abuse Information.

³ Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, *Healthy People 2010*. 2nd ed. With Understanding and Improving Health and Objectives for Improving Health. 2 vols. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, November 2000.